

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 BIB-01 ACDA-07 /078 W
-----049846 251205Z /50

R 250915Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5212
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SO, UR, IT
SUBJ: SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE: ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY POSITION

SUMMARY: ITALIAN COMMUNIST AND PARLIAMENTARIAN ACHILLO OCCHETTO LED DELEGATION TO SOMALIA RECENTLY TO DISCUSS WITH PRESIDENT SIAD HIS DISPUTE WITH BOTH MOSCOW AND MARXIST ETHIOPIA. OCCHETTO WAS REPORTEDLY WON OVER TO SIAD'S HARD-LINE AND RETURNED TO ITALY AUGUST 21 TO SEEK FURTHER SUPPORT IN PCI AND ITALIAN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES FOR SOMALIA'S CAUSE. SOMALI DOVES HAVE ALSO REPORTEDLY LOST OUT TO SNA HAWKS ON ETHIOPIAN QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

1. ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER ACHILLO OCCHETTO LED DELEGATION TO SOMALIA IN LATE JULY OR EARLY AUGUST TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT SIAD TO DISCUSS HIS CURRENT IDEOLOGICAL DISPUTE WITH MOSCOW REGARDING SO-CALLED NATIONALITIES PROBLEM IN ETHIOPIA. ACCORDING ITALIAN EMBASSY SOURCE, OCCHETTO HAS BEEN ADMIRER OF SIAD'S SOCIALISM AND WAS GUEST OF GSDR DURING OCTOBER 21 CELEBRATIONS IN 1976. HE IS ALSO MEMBER OF CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMISSION AND MEMBER OF ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

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2. ACCORDING TO ITALIAN EMBASSY OFFICER, OCCHETTO WAS DISPATCHED TO SOMALIA ON FACT-FINDING MISSION BY PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOLLOWING DISPUTE WITHIN PARTY RANKS OVER SOMALI/ETHIOPIAN PROBLEM. ANOTHER PCI DELEGATION VISITED MOSCOW EARLIER IN YEAR AND RETURNED TO ROME IN AGREEMENT WITH SOVIET LINE WHICH SUPPORTED ETHIOPIAN MARXISTS AGAINST SOMALIA'S HARD LINE. SOME PCI MEMBERS

TOOK ISSUE WITH MOSCOW POSITION, INCLUDING OCHETTO, AND AS RESULT HE LED FACT FINDING DELEGATION TO MOGADISCIO.

3. IN INTERVIEW WITH WEEKLY MOGADISCIO PAPER HORSEED GIVEN PRIOR HIS MEETING WITH SIAD, OCHETTO COMMENTED AT LENGTH ON PROBLEM IN HORN. HE SAID PCI HOPED TO SEE CURRENT CONTROVERSY RESOLVED THROUGH NEGOTIATION RATHER THAN BLOODSHED. PCI WANTED A UNIFIED HORN OF AFRICA QUOTE FREE FROM COLONIALISM AND ABLE TO PURSUE ITS OWN GOALS INDEPENDENT OF IMPERIALIST POWERS. UNQUOTE. HE SAID THAT THIS IDEAL COULDNT BE ATTAINED UNLESS QUOTE CURRENT NATIONAL PROBLEMS INHERITED FROM COLONIAL ERA UNQUOTE WERE RESOLVED. HE WAS TALKING ABOUT NON-AMHARA PEOPLES IN ETHIOPIA.

4. OCHETTO WENT ON TO SAY THAT SOMALIA'S OGADEN PROBLEM WAS CAUSED NOT BY RUSSIANS OR CHINESE BUT INHERITED FROM QUOTE IMPERIALISTS, NAMELY BRITISH, SUPPORTED BY US. UNQUOTE. TURNING TO ETHIOPIA, OCHETTO SAID THAT PCI QUOTE MUST STATE UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT IN OUR VIEW A DEMOCRATIC ANTI-COLONIALIST NATION SHOULD SOLVE ITS PROBLEM IN A DEMOCRATIC WAY. THIS, IN ESSENCE, MEANS SOLVING THEM BY THE DECISION OF THE PEOPLE --SELF DETERMINATION-- WHO MAY CHOOSE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, LOCAL AUTONOMY OR NATIONAL UNIFICATION AS THE CIRCUMSTANCES MAY SUGGEST. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD DECIDE THEIR OWN FUTURE. UNQUOTE.

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5. QUOTE HOWEVER, JUST AS WE HAVE ALREADY TAKEN POSITIVE STAND IN REGARD TO LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN ERITREA, WE CANNOT NOW IGNORE THE PRESENCE IN WESTERN SOMALIA OF LIBERATION MOVEMENT WHOSE STRUGGLE HAS ALREADY MET WITH SOME SUCCESS. AT THE SAME TIME WE CANNOT IGNORE THE FACT THAT THERE ARE TODAY AS THERE ALWAYS HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST --EVEN UNDER HAILE SELASSIE -- LARGE BODIES OF NOMADIC SOMALIS MOVING CONSTANTLY BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ADJOINING LANDS UNDER ETHIOPIAN RULE. IT WOULD BE ABSURD NOT TO TAKE THIS FACT INTO ACCOUNT. AS I HAVE ALREADY STATED, OUR PARTY PREFERS NEGOTIATION AND AGREEMENT BE IT EVEN GRADUALLY ARRIVED AT TO DIRECT STRUGGLE, BUT IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT WEAPONS ARE NOW HAVING THEIR SAY. OUR PRINCIPAL HOPE IS THAT SOMALIS AND ETHIOPIANS WILL REACH AN AGREEMENT BEFORE A CHASM OF HATRED SEPARATES THEM WITHOUT POSSIBILITY OF RECONCILIATION.

6. QUOTE ACTUALLY I FEEL THAT MAJOR PROBLEM FACING BOTH COUNTRIES AT THIS POINT LIES IN HOW TO SOLVE THEIR CONFLICT WITHOUT ENDANGERING THE UNITY OF THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST MOVEMENT. THE LATTER CANNOT SURVIVE UNLESS A DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION IS FOUND FOR THE FORMER. WITHOUT ANTI-IMPERIALIST UNITY,

WITHOUT UNITY AMONG ALL SOCIALISTS AND UNITY WITH THE SOVIET UNION, IT WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE COUNTRIES OF AFRICAN HORN. INDEED, IF THE STAND NOW BEING ADVOCATED BY CERTAIN REACTIONARY FORCES FEIGNING TO SUPPORT A JUST SOMALI CLAIM SHOULD ULTIMATELY PREVAIL, THE PEOPLE OF THE HORN WOULD LOSE THEIR FREEDOM. THEREFORE WE EARNESTLY HOPE THAT PEOPLE OF ERITREA AND THOSE OF WESTERN SOMALIA WILL EQUALLY MAKE GOOD THEIR RIGHTFUL CLAIMS AND THAT SOCIALISM MAY EXPAND THROUGHOUT THE REGION, FROM SOMALIA TO ETHIOPIA. THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE HORN, IT MUST BE REPEATED, CAN BE ASSURED ONLY WHEN ALL ITS PEOPLE ARE UNDER SOCIALIST PROTECTION. THIS APPLIES EQUALLY TO SOMALIA WHICH IS ALREADY INDEPENDENT AND TO OTHER PEOPLES STILL STRUGGLING TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

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7. OCHETTO'S STATEMENTS TO PRESS SUGGEST THAT HE FAVORED SIAD POSITION ON RIGHT OF OGADEN AND OTHER ETHIOPIAN PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION EVEN BEFORE HE MET WITH SIAD ON AUGUST 19 OR 20. IN THEIR HOUR-LONG MEETING, SIAD MADE IMPASSIONED ATTACK AGAINST MENGISTU'S SOCIALIST PRETENSIONS. HE CLAIMS THAT ETHIOPIANS WERE PLANNING TO INVADE SOMALIA WITH HELP OF FOREIGN TROOPS. WE ASSUME THAT SIAD OPTED SAME UNCOMPROMISING POSITION GSDR MEDIA AND SIAD HIMSELF HAS TAKEN WITH REGARD TO

MENGISTU (MOGADISCIO 1429), WHOM HE REGARDS AS COLONIALIST OPPRESSOR AND IN TRADITION OF MENELIK AND HAILE SELASSIE RATHER THAN MARX OR LENIN.

8. ACCORDING ITALIAN EMBOFF, OCHETTO WAS SO SHAKEN BY SIAD'S ATTACK AND ETHIOPIAN THREAT THAT HE CUT SHORT HIS VISIT AND RETURNED TO ROME AUGUST 21, REPORTEDLY TO DRUM UPSUPPORT FOR SIAD IN PCI AND ITALIAN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES. HE EVIDENTLY WAS CONVINCED THAT SIAD TOTALLY UNWILLING TO COMPROMISE ON OGADEN ISSUE AND RIGHT OF NON-AMHARA PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION.

9. ITALIAN EMBOFF ALSO OBSERVED THAT SIAD'S MARXIST MENTORS IN GSDR -- MOST NOTABLY MOHAMED ADEN WHO HAS CLOSE TIES TO PCI AND OCHETTO IN PARTICULAR -- HAVE ALSO TAKEN SIMILAR HARD

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LINE IN RECENT WEEKS. WHEREAS IN LATE JULY, ADEN AND OTHER CIVILIAN ADVISORS WERE URGING SIAD AND SOMALI MILITARY TO SEEK SOME SORT OF NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITH MENGISTU REGIME, WITHIN LAST WEEK, ADEN HAS ALSO ADOPTED SIAD AND SOMALI MILITARY'S UNCOMPROMISING HARD LINE. ACCORDING EMBOFF, ADEN SAID WITHIN PAST SEVERAL DAYS THAT ONLY SOLUTION TO ETHIOPIAN WARS WAS FOR MENGISTU TO GIVE SELF-DETERMINATION TO ALL OPPRESSED QUOTE NATIONALITIES UNQUOTE NOW LIVING UNDER MENGISTU'S DEOMINATION.

10. ITALIAN EMBASSY SAYS THAT IN LATE JULY DISPUTE FLARED UP BETWEEN SNA HAWKS AND GSDR SOCIALIST DOVES, LIKE ADEN, WHO WANT TO SEE SOCIALIST FRONT PRESERVED AND NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WORKED OUT WITH MENGISTU REGIME. DOVES LOST OUT AND MOHAMED ADEN, WHO SEEMS TO BE THEIR SPOKESMAN, HOW PUSHING SNA LINE. SUCH A UNIFIED FRONT IS BASED PRIMARILY UPON WSLF MILITARY SUCCESSES IN OGADEN AND WOULD PROBABLY LAST ONLY SO LONG AS MILITARY SUCCESSES SEEM TO MAKE IT CREDIBLE.

LOUGHTRAN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1488084
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE: ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY POSITION SUMMARY: ITALIAN COMMUNIST AND PARLIAMENTARIAN ACHILLO OCHETTO LED DELEGATION TO SOMALIA RECENTLY TO DISC
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SO, UR, IT, ET
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/39657053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009